

**SUPERIOR COURT, STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO**

**VETERAN'S MEMORIAL BUILDING
801 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA
805-781-5677**

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)	CASE NUMBER:
)	
Plaintiffs,)	CASE MANAGEMENT ORDER
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vs.)	
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Defendants.)	
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I. GENERAL MATTERS

A. It is the Court's policy to provide a dignified forum in which to resolve disputes in a peaceful, professional, legally correct and expeditious manner. All of the following rules are designed to achieve these goals. It is not the Court's intention to prohibit a party from raising any issue by any means allowed by Rule of Court, Code or statute. If any of the rules or procedures discussed herein creates a problem, counsel should raise the matter with the Court at the earliest opportunity after the parties have appeared.

B. The Court will not allow conduct that is generally understood to be unprofessional. Profanity or rude or boisterous conduct is subject to sanction.

C. The Vets Hall Website is <http://www.slocourts.net/civil/family/vets.cfm>. Counsel are encouraged to check this site periodically for notices, information, events, orders, and other matters.

D. Electronic communication with the courtroom clerk is permissible for routine communications having to do with scheduling, stipulated continuances, joint requests. Substantive arguments are not permitted unless approved by the Court. In any correspondence with the clerk, opposing counsel should be copied in order to avoid ex-parte communications. The clerk's email address is Lynne.Tetley@slo.courts.ca.gov. Counsel who wish to receive email notification of events should provide the clerk with an email address.

E. Counsel will turn off all audible telephones and pagers and will instruct their clients and witnesses to do so. Communication devices worn on the head are not permitted in the courtroom.

II. CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCES ("CMC")

A. CMCs will generally be conducted in the courtroom, although counsel may request "in chambers" conferences without the presence of the parties.

B. Unless otherwise specifically ordered, CMC Statements are not required. The Court expects that counsel be prepared to discuss the current status of the case, discovery, amenability to mediation, and any unusual factual, legal or evidentiary issues that may need resolution. Counsel who fail to appear will typically be set for an OSC hearing why sanctions should not be issued. The initial amount is ordinarily \$150.00.

C. Early mediation is strongly encouraged. Good faith participation in mediation will ordinarily excuse participation in a Mandatory Settlement Conference. The Court will typically sign an order to mediate at an early CMC. In the event the parties choose judicial mediation, delays may result. The parties are encouraged to agree upon one or more backup mediators in the event a judge is unavailable at the scheduled date and time. A list of potential backup mediators is available from the clerk.

D. It is the Court's policy to resolve discovery disputes informally and efficiently. Accordingly, the Court has instituted special procedures for the resolution of discovery disputes through Pretrial Discovery Conferences, which can be scheduled on forms that are available from the clerk's office.

III. MEDIATION

A. The parties are strongly encouraged to engage in early, meaningful mediation. Mediation will ordinarily take place within 45-60 days of all parties' appearance, but a longer time may of course be allowed. Either private or judicial mediation is acceptable. Parties wishing judicial mediators are strongly encouraged to have private "backup" mediators in mind in the event judicial officers are unavailable on the scheduled mediation date.

B. Parties who select private mediation should comply with the mediator's instructions regarding briefing and payment of fees, which ordinarily should be divided equally.

C. A worthwhile mediation process means that parties, attorneys, and any other person whose consent or authority is required to achieve a final disposition of the dispute should be present, as well as a representative of any insurer who has authority to settle the case for any amount up to the limits of the policy.

D. Plaintiff should file a one-page Notice of Mediation with the clerk's office notifying the Court of the date of the mediation and name of the mediator.

IV. LAW AND MOTION MATTERS

A. To the extent practicable, the Court will post tentative rulings on law and motion matters at <http://www.slocourts.net/civil/family/vets.cfm>, no later than the evening before the hearing. Counsel who jointly agree to submit on the tentative should notify the clerk via e-mail or by phone. The tentative ruling will become the ruling of the Court and memorialized in a written order that either one of the parties or the clerk will prepare and serve. If e-mail addresses have been provided, the Court will also do its best to send tentative and final rulings in PDF format directly to the parties.

B. The parties are strongly encouraged to "preview" complicated law and motion matters with the Court at CMCs. This procedure may obviate or narrow the scope of summary judgment motions and other matters that depend heavily on controverted facts, which will save time and effort of all involved.

C. Resolution of Discovery Disputes

1. No motion under Section 2016.010 through 2036.050, inclusive, of the California Code of Civil Procedure shall be heard unless counsel for the moving party has first requested an informal Pretrial Discovery Conference with the Court and such request has either been denied or the discovery dispute has not been resolved as a consequence of such a Conference.

a. Any request for a Pretrial Discovery Conference must be filed with the clerk's office on the approved form (provided by the clerk), must include a brief summary of the dispute, and must be served on opposing counsel in the same manner as the request is filed with the clerk. Any opposition to a request for a Pretrial Discovery Conference must also be filed on an approved form (provided by the clerk), must include a brief summary of why the requested discovery should be denied, must be filed within two (2) business days of receipt of the request, and must be served on opposing counsel in the same manner as the opposition is filed with the clerk.

b. No other pleadings, including but not limited to exhibits, declarations, or attachments, will be accepted.

c. The parties will be notified by minute order whether the request has been granted or denied and, if granted, the date and time of the Pretrial Discovery Conference.

d. For cases already in the discovery pipeline, counsel are strongly encouraged to stipulate to the expedited discovery procedures on forms that are available in the courtroom.

2. Where privilege is a basis for refusal to produce documents, privilege logs are strongly encouraged. The information should include a description of all sending and receiving entities, as well as details of the information sufficient to apprise the opposing party of the reason for the privilege classification.

V. READINESS CONFERENCE

A. These conferences are typically scheduled at 8:30 a.m. one week before trial. At these conferences, trial counsel should be *personally present*, and prepared to discuss at least the following topics:

1. Estimated trial length. A jury trial will ordinarily be in session from Monday through Friday from 1:30 to 4:45 p.m., although trial days beginning at 10:30 a.m. are not uncommon.

2. Number, timing and availability of witnesses, as well as any special witness needs, or the need to call witnesses out of order.

a. Counsel have responsibility for arranging the appearance of all witnesses during their presentation of the case so as to eliminate delays. Counsel should confer among themselves as to when witnesses will be needed *at least 24-48 hours in advance of a witness' testimony*.

b. Counsel are to inquire of their clients and witnesses to determine whether they are in need of any type of accommodation with an interpreter, under the Americans with Disabilities Act, or any other type of assistance. Timely notice is important so as not to delay trial

3. Numbering and exchange of exhibits. The parties are encouraged to agree upon a reasonable exhibit numbering system. Exhibits to be used in the case-in-chief should be pre-marked and exchanged *no later than the morning of trial and earlier if feasible*. The use of exhibit books or binders is strongly encouraged

4. Voir dire procedures, including mini-opening statement and preinstruction, and jury questionnaire. Counsel should attempt to agree upon a brief neutral statement of the case to be read to the prospective jury panel, as well as one or two substantive jury instructions that will inform the jury about the basic legal issues in the case. The Court will use a questionnaire to obtain basic information regarding juror backgrounds, biases and understandings of juror duties. Each party can add up to five factual questions tailored to the particular case.

5. Jury instructions and verdict forms.

a. Counsel are to deliver all proposed instructions, verdict forms and requests for special findings to the Court and to opposing counsel *no later than the morning of trial*. Proposed instructions shall be complete in all respects without unfilled "blanks" or "bracketed" portions.

b. Either before or shortly after trial starts, counsel are to meet and confer with the goal of reducing the amount of contested jury instructions and disagreement as to the form of the verdict. Within two (2) court days after beginning trial, all counsel should notify the Court in writing as to which of the proposed instructions, and which sections of the verdict form, are acceptable to all parties, and which are disputed.

6. Stipulations to reduce the length of trial, including testimony or exhibits. Counsel should consult with each other regarding all possible stipulations and reduce them to writing. In particular, counsel should consider waiving the necessity for authentication/foundational evidence regarding all trial exhibits, unless authentication is an important issue

7. Motions in limine. Prior to hearings on motions in limine, counsel should review *Kelly v. New West Federal Savings* (1996) 49 Cal.App.4th 659.

VI. TRIAL

A. The Court will typically hear organizational and scheduling matters, procedural issues and in limine motions beginning at 8:30 a.m. on the morning of trial, including any matters left over or continued from the readiness conference.

1. Originals of all depositions to be used in the trial are to be lodged with the Clerk at this time. At the end of the trial, these depositions can be picked up from the Clerk, or they can be returned by mail at the party's expense.

2. Jury instructions and verdict forms should be submitted at this time.

B. Jury Selection Procedures

1. Jury selection ordinarily begins at 1:30 p.m. the day of trial.

2. A short statement of the case is read and preinstruction of the venire occurs

3. Mini opening statements of no more than 3 minutes by each side are then allowed and encouraged.

4. The entire panel is screened for hardship.

5. Eighteen names are drawn at random, and voir dire is conducted by the Court, with the written jury questionnaire as the main basis for examination.

6. Counsel conducts follow up voir dire of the prospective jurors for thirty minutes, subject to the following:

a. Argumentative questions are not permitted (upon objection).

b. Previewing the case is not permitted (upon objection).

7. Challenges for cause are exercised and ruled upon at sidebar.

8. At least two alternate jurors are typically selected. If it becomes necessary to substitute an alternate juror, the first alternate chosen will be the first substitute

9. Trial Procedures

a. No charts, diagrams or other exhibits should be shown to the jury or read aloud to the jury unless by stipulation of all the parties or after admission of the item into evidence.

b. Counsel must provide hard copies of any power point presentations, film and the like to opposing counsel in advance of showing to the jury

c. Marking documents out of files: Please review *Neal v. Farmers Insurance Exchange* (1978) 21 Cal.3d 910, 923-924.

d. Any object that cannot be folded into 8½" x 11" such as models, blowups, etc. must be accompanied by either a photograph or a photocopy to be retained by the Court in lieu of the oversized exhibit.

e. When objections are made, counsel should state only the legal basis, without speaking objections. Sidebar conferences are allowed when necessary to expand or explain issues.

f. Sidebar conferences are normally held off the record. Counsel may make a record of any unreported sidebar conference at an appropriate opportunity in the proceedings. During trial, if counsel wish to place matters on the record, he or she may so request and the Court will provide an opportunity to do so, ordinarily at the end of the trial day once the jury has been excused

10. Post Trial Procedures

a. After the verdict is rendered by the jury, the prevailing party is expected to prepare the judgment, which must be submitted on the next Court day following trial unless otherwise ordered

b. Counsel should make arrangements with the Clerk to withdraw exhibits in cases that will not be appealed. The Clerk will hold the exhibits for sixty days after the filing of the notice of entry of judgment. Any exhibits remaining after that time will be destroyed unless a notice of appeal is filed.

c. Counsel will advise their clients and witnesses about the rulings on the motions in limine. Counsel will be held responsible for any violations of the Court's Orders.

DATED:

HON. CHARLES S. CRANDALL
Judge of the Superior Court
County of San Luis Obispo